

Amendments to the Claims:

Claims 1-16 (Canceled).

Claim 17 (Original): A game machine comprising:
radio circuitry configured to transmit and receive messages via a paging system;
a user interface enabling a user to provide inputs to the game machine;
a memory for storing message credits; and
a processing system operable in response to user inputs to transmit messages via
the paging system if sufficient message credits are stored in the memory.

Claim 18 (Original): The game machine according to claim 17, wherein
the radio circuitry is provided as part of a pager cartridge that is removably attachable to
the game machine.

Claim 19 (Original): The game machine according to claim 17, wherein
the processing system decreases the number of message credits in the memory in
accordance with sizes of the transmitted messages.

Claim 20 (Original): The game machine according to claim 17, wherein
the number of message credits in the memory is increasable in response to user inputs via
the user interface.

Claim 21 (Original): The game machine according to claim 20, wherein
the user inputs for increasing the number of message credits in the memory comprise
alphanumeric inputs.

Claim 22 (Original): The game machine according to claim 21, wherein a
message based on the alphanumeric inputs is transmitted by the radio circuitry to a

remote location for authentication of the alphanumeric inputs and the number of message credits in the memory is increased only if a authentication message is received by the radio circuitry from the remote location.

Claim 23 (Original): The game machine according to claim 17, further comprising:

a display,

wherein the processing system is operable to cause the display to display indicia indicative of the number of message credits in the memory.

Claim 24 (Original): The game machine according to claim 17, further comprising:

a display,

wherein the processing system is operable to cause the display to display reminder indicia when the number of message credits in the memory falls below a predetermined number of message credits.

Claim 25 (Original): The game machine according to claim 17, wherein the processing system is operable in response to user inputs to cause the display to display messages received by the radio circuitry.

Claim 26 (Original): The game machine according to claim 17, wherein the processing system is operable to change the number of message units stored in the memory in response to a message received by the radio circuitry.

Claim 27 (Original): The game machine according to claim 17, wherein the processing system is operable to change the number of message units stored in the memory in accordance with scanned data.

Claim 28 (Original): The game machine according to claim 17, wherein the processing system is operable to change the number of message units stored in the memory in accordance with data read from a magnetic stripe.

Claim 29 (Original): A video game machine comprising:
radio circuitry configured to transmit and receive messages over a wireless communication network;
a user interface enabling a user to provide inputs to the video game machine;
a memory for storing message credits; and
a processing system operable in response to user inputs to transmit messages via the wireless communication network if sufficient message credits are stored in the memory.

Claim 30 (Canceled).

Claim 31 (Original): A video game apparatus comprising:
radio frequency communication circuitry for transmitting and receiving messages over a wireless communication network;
storage for storing game-related activation data included in received messages;
and
a processing system for executing a video game program, the video game program including embedded game features that are activated by the game-related activation data stored in the storage.

Claim 32 (Original): The video game apparatus according to claim 31, wherein the processing system is embodied in a hand-held unit, and the radio frequency communication circuitry and the storage are embodied in a device that is detachably connectable to the hand-held unit.

Claim 33 (Original): The video game apparatus according to claim 31, wherein the game-related activation data comprises game character activation data for activating video game characters.

Claim 34 (Original): The video game apparatus according to claim 31, wherein the game-related activation data comprises collectible activation data for activating video game collectibles.

Claim 35 (Original): The video game apparatus according to claim 31, wherein the game-related activation data comprises game level activation data for activating additional video game levels.

Claim 36 (Original): A video game apparatus comprising:
radio frequency communication circuitry for transmitting and receiving messages over a wireless communication network;
storage for storing video game intervention data included in received messages;
and
a processing system for executing a video game program for a video game, wherein video game interventions are provided based on the video game intervention data stored in the storage.

Claim 37 (Original): The video game apparatus according to claim 36, wherein the message including the video game intervention data is communicated from another video game apparatus.

Claim 38 (Original): The video game apparatus according to claim 36, wherein the video game intervention data comprises video game elements solicited by a player playing the video game.

Claim 39 (Original): The video game apparatus according to claim 36, wherein the video game intervention data comprises video game elements unsolicited by a player playing the video game.

Claim 40 (Original): The video game apparatus according to claim 36, wherein the video game program includes a limit on the number of video game interventions during the playing of the video game.

Claim 41 (Original): The video game apparatus according to claim 36, wherein the message including the video game intervention data is responsive to a background message transmitted by the video game apparatus during the playing of the video game.

Claim 42 (Original): The video game apparatus according to claim 41, wherein the video game program permits the setting of a limit on the number of background messages transmitted during the playing of the game.

Claim 43 (Original): A hand-held game machine for playing a video game, comprising:
a display;
radio frequency communication circuitry for transmitting and receiving messages over a wireless communication network; and
a processing system for executing a video game program that generates game displays on the display, wherein the video game program includes instructions for automatically transmitting game player identification information over the wireless communication network.

Claim 44 (Original): A hand-held game machine for playing a video game, comprising:
a display;

radio frequency communication circuitry for transmitting and receiving messages over a wireless communication network; and

a processing system for executing a video game program and for controlling the communication circuitry to communicate one or both of sound and visual data over the wireless communication network.

Claim 45 (Original): The hand-held game machine according to claim 44, wherein the communicated one or both of sound and visual data comprises one or both of compressed sound and visual data.

Claim 46 (Original): A hand-held game machine, comprising:
a display;
radio frequency communication circuitry for transmitting and receiving messages over a wireless communication network; and
a processing system for executing a video game program, wherein the processing system is responsive to a received message for disabling the radio frequency communication circuitry.

Claims 47-49 (Canceled).

Claim 50 (New): The video game apparatus according to claim 31, wherein the processing system is embodied in a hand-held unit comprising a touch-sensitive display screen.

Claim 51 (New): The video game apparatus according to claim 36, wherein the processing system is embodied in a hand-held unit comprising a touch-sensitive display screen.

Claim 52 (New): The hand-held game machine according to claim 43, wherein the display comprises a touch-sensitive display screen.

Claim 53 (New): The hand-held game machine according to claim 44, wherein the display comprises a touch-sensitive display screen.

Claim 54 (New): The hand-held game machine according to claim 46, wherein the display comprises a touch-sensitive display screen.

Claim 55 (New): A hand-held game machine for playing a video game, comprising:

- a touch-sensitive display;
- wireless communication circuitry for transmitting and receiving messages;
- a processing system for executing a video game program that generates game displays on the display;
- one or more input devices supplied with inputs for instructing movement of a game character during execution of the video game program; and
- a vibration circuit for generating vibrations when messages are received.

Claim 56 (New): The hand-held game machine according to claim 55, wherein one or more messages are transmitted along with a persona character.

Claim 57 (New): The hand-held game machine according to claim 55, wherein the messages comprise user-generated graphics.

Claim 58 (New): The hand-held game machine according to claim 55, further comprising:

- a sound circuit for generating sounds when messages are received.

Claim 59 (New): The hand-held game machine according to claim 55, further comprising:

- a sound circuit for generating music when messages are received.

Claim 60 (New): The hand-held game machine according to claim 55, wherein the transmitted messages include user-composed messages comprising user-generated graphics.

Claim 61 (New): The hand-held game machine according to claim 55, further comprising:
a storage device for storing standard words and phrases for composing messages.

Claim 62 (New): The hand-held game machine according to claim 55, further comprising:
a storage device for storing user-defined words and phrases for composing messages.

Claim 63 (New): The hand-held game machine according to claim 55, further comprising:
a storage device for storing standard graphics and symbols for composing messages.

Claim 64 (New): The hand-held game machine according to claim 55, further comprising:
a storage device for storing user-defined graphics and symbols for composing messages.

Claim 65 (New): The hand-held game machine according to claim 55, further comprising:
a storage device for storing audio pieces for composing messages.

Claim 66 (New): The hand-held game machine according to claim 55, further comprising:

an on-screen keyboard for composing messages.

Claim 67 (New): The hand-held game machine according to claim 55,
further comprising:
a storage device for selectively storing received messages.

Claim 68 (New): A hand-held game machine for playing a video game,
comprising:
a touch-sensitive display;
wireless communication circuitry for transmitting and receiving messages over a
wireless communication network;
a processing system for executing a video game program that generates game
displays on the display and generates background messages which are transmitted via the
wireless communication network while the video game program is being executed.

Claim 69 (New): The hand-held game machine according to claim 68,
wherein the number of background messages generated while the video game program is
being executed is user configurable.